2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

of the year, and in some districts is hardly obtainable at all. Of fifteen villages visited by Mrs. Gore-Brown in 1936, four had eaten no meat at all during the seven months under observation, although these communities were settled in reputedly good hunting country. In the remaining 11 villages such totals as 13, 5, 9, and 25 small duiker had been divided. In another village where the reckoning had been made for a period of a year 40 duiker had been killed.[1] Of the three villages in which the diets have been analysed (Appendix C), it will be seen that no animal protein of any kind was eaten during the two weeks of observation in the case of one: in another it was very low.

In the ordinary Bemba village a little fish is caught in the small rivers at certain months of the year when the waters are flooding the banks or are falling again, but fish cannot be reckoned as an important article of diet except among the peoples who live on the banks of big rivers such as the Chambesi. Caterpillars are obtainable everywhere during the wet season, and make a quite considerable contribution to the animal protein of this diet.

Of the other subsidiary food, green leaves, either cultivated or wild, which form the main source of vitamin C, are obtainable for six or seven months of the year (April to September), while fruits are limited to two months (October and November). The edible gourds and mushrooms eaten as subsidiary foods in the hunger months of the year have little nutritive value.

Salt is not easily obtained (cf. p. 55). When available, about a teaspoonful a day would be spared for cooking, but it is not uncommon to find households that have been some weeks without any salt at all, and which have not been able to make good this deficiency by eating meat.

As far as it is possible to speak of the composition of the diet as a whole, generalizations based on figures collected in three villages at different seasons of the year show that the average calorie intake is 1,706 per man value per day, i.e. just over half that which is considered adequate in England and America. The fat is only an eighth as much as is usually eaten on our mixed diets. The intakes of calcium and phosphorus compare very favourably with those in England and America. Salt is exceedingly deficient at all seasons of the year. While it is impossible, for want of further information, to make direct comparisons with English scales of diet, it is

[1] A duiker might be reckoned the size of a small goat.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

locusts, ants, vegetables (wild and cultivated), mushrooms, &c.— prepared to eat with porridge. The functions of the relish are two: first to make the *ubwali* easier to swallow, and second to give it taste. A lump of porridge is glutinous and also gritty—the latter not only owing to the flour of which it is made, but to the extraneous matter mixed in with it on the grindstone. It needs a coating of something slippery to make it slide down the throat. Dipping the porridge in a liquid stew makes it easier to swallow. Thus the use of *umunani*, which to European eyes adds valuable constituents to the diet, is defended by the native on the ground that it overcomes the purely mechanical difficulty of getting the food down the throat. Some of the relishes are themselves difficult to swallow, in particular the wild forms of spinach (*umusalu*), which are stringy and often bitter. These the natives cook with ground-nut sauce (*ntwilo*) (cf. p. 95). To the European this seems to add a valuable constituent to the diet—fat—of which the supply is short in this area, but the Bemba himself explains that the sauce is not food. It is used to make the relish soft. It prevents the food 'coming back'. Meat and vegetable stews are cooked with salt whenever possible, and there is no doubt that an additional function of the relish in native eyes is to give the porridge taste and to lessen the monotony of the diet. Ground-nut sauce is also praised as bringing out the taste of a number of different relishes such as mushrooms, caterpillars, &c.

In general, only one relish is eaten at a meal. The Bemba do not like to mix their foods, and despise the European habit of eating a meal composed of two or three kinds of dishes. He calls this habit *ukusobelekanya* and one said, 'It is like a bird first to pick at this and then at that, or like a child who nibbles here and there through the day.'[1]

This habit of eating one relish at a time can probably be accounted for by the fact that there are few available choices of dish in any one day, and that the Bemba, with their traditional customs of hospitality, finish up all they cook. They do not keep a little bit of stew in a larder for to-morrow. It would be eaten by a passing relative. Nor do they plan several days' menu ahead

[1] But it is clear that the Bemba are not here implicating any modern dietetic theory, such as the principle advocated recently by Dr. Hay, that protein and starch should not be eaten together, for their favourite meal is porridge and meat.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

dishes they use the word *ukukauka*, meaning to be sharp and acid, like lemon-juice, in the mouth,[1] but very few acid fruits were eaten before the introduction of different citrus trees by the white man. Children eat lemons unsweetened and enjoy the bite of the acid, unlike most Europeans. The word *ukusasa* is used of foods that have gone sour or fermented, like beer a few days old, while *ukulula* describes the bitter taste of some of the wild spinaches which the women try to make more palatable with the addition of potash salts (*ifishikisa*) prepared from bush plants or ground-nut sauce. Sweet foods, in the sense of those with a sugary taste, are rare, though honey is sometimes found and is considered a great delicacy, and the stalk of the sweet sorghum (*icisale*) is chewed by children. The fruit of the *umupundu* and the *umusuku* trees are also sweetish. But sweetness in the sense that we understand it is not a term that could be applied to any Bemba dish, and the word *ukuloa* which is used to translate the English 'sweet' really means to be pleasant or palatable. Sugar becomes almost a necessity when natives have become accustomed to it, and the children brought up in urban areas where it is the fashion to use it, find it impossible for a time to eat *ubwali* without it when they are sent back to their own villages.[2] Strong tastes such as ginger root, peppermint, aromatic or hot flavours apparently do not exist, except for the pepper known as *mpilipili*, which is occasionally dried and used as a relish and described as making the mouth hot.[3] In fact, strong tastes are definitely not characteristic of Bemba diet.

(*b*) *Salt hunger*. Of the special cravings recognized by the Bemba the longing for salt is probably the most pronounced. Salt has always been hard to get in this country, and meat and other foods richly supplied with it are rare. In the old days the natural salt found in the pans at Mpika[4] and crystallized out into roundish lumps was among the few goods traded about the country. These salt balls were valued so highly that they were used as tribute to be given to chiefs, who themselves distributed them as rewards to faithful followers. To a certain extent they do so still. The process of evaporating salt from river grasses is

[1] E. B. H. Goodall adds 'salty': *Some Wemba Words*, p. 44.

[2] It is interesting to note that honey is considered bad for a sick person because it 'makes the heart beat fast'.

[3] This is in marked difference to W. African diets, where most dishes of stew are highly seasoned with peppers of different kinds.

[4] Cf. Appendix B for composition.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

laborious and the product bitter to the taste. European salt is much better liked, but it is hard to get except in districts near white stores. In distant parts of the country both European and Mpika salt are used for barter, and the traveller will notice as he gets farther and farther away from civilization that the purchasing power of salt goes up and that of money goes down. The white man's carriers are given salt in part payment for their work so that they may buy their provisions with it, and women prefer it to any other form of payment for small services. I have often found that children would rather be given a little European salt than a sweet, and they eat it neat. At Katenda's village during a period of shortage (March 1933) some children, who had been living for some weeks chiefly on gourds, picked up grains of salt from the floor of my tent with moistened fingers. Their avid faces were striking.

The craving for salt is so strong that the word itself (*umucele*) has come to have figurative meanings. In proverbs and folk-tales the husband goes to fetch salt from distant places, and this represents the fulfilment of his duties as a husband. In the girls' initiation ceremony the woman who dresses up as a mock bridegroom at one stage of the ritual, carries an imitation lump of salt over her shoulder, and small pieces are included among the sacred objects (*mbusa*) presented to the girl during the rite. In the ceremonial of founding a chief's new village, salt, together with flour and meat, are buried in the foundations of the ruler's hut. Nowadays, too, the word *umucele* is sometimes used as a generic term for European goods as being the most highly valued of these. Two old women who came to live near Kasama because of the shopping facilities there, described their motive as, 'We came to lick a little of the white man's salt'.[1]

(*c*) *Meat.* The natives' longing for meat is also almost a craving. Meat and fish are considered the *umunani par excellence* and a special word *ubukashya* is used to describe the hunger for meat as distinct from other foods. The supply of game has probably always been inadequate in this area, but the situation is considerably worse to-day. I have noticed that natives returning from the copper field, however sceptical they may be of the other advantages of civilization, are all unanimous that 'It is fine to get so much meat.' In his own country it is no exaggeration to

[1] *Twaisako kumyanga tumucele.*

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

252 3. *Roasting* (*ukuoca*) *or dry cooking* (*ukusalula*). The Bemba have no real method of baking or roasting, but they occasionally cook foods in the ashes of open fires, and prepare sweet potatoes, maize cobs, or meat skewered on sticks in this way when on a journey. Another method of cooking is to put the food on an open potsherd over the fire with just sufficient water to prevent scorching (*ukusalula nkwangwa*). It is one of the few quick ways of preparing a relish. Fat meat is sometimes cooked in this manner, fresh green legume pods, ground-beans, ground-nuts, or dried spinaches softened with a little potash salt (*ifishikisa*). But this latter dish is only used as a last resource. Natives say it is so dry and hard 'You eat it and it goes crack, crack, crack in your mouth' (*mulelya muleti kwa kwa kwa!*).

●263 4. *Seasoning*. It is interesting that salt, that scarce commodity, is only used for the most tasteless foods, i.e. spinaches, dried potatoes, or mushrooms (*fyafubulula*), the wild orchid (*cikanda*), and the dried cakes made of legumes (*citata*). It is also used to bring out the flavour of the ground-nut sauce. It is invariably added after the cooking. The use of a potash salt (*ifishikisa*) made from the bark of certain trees, to soften dried spinaches, is an interesting adaptation to the environment.

252 *Various fruits: Amankolobwe*. This is a little cucumber with a hard, wrinkled skin which is used either as a relish or to be eaten alone during the hunger months. It may be boiled whole and the contents sucked through a hole at one end, or it may be stewed until soft, pouring off the juice to make a hot drink 'just like tea'. Another way is to pull off the outer skins and to cook them with *ifishikisa* as a relish in the hunger months. The leaves provide an unpalatable relish and the seeds are sometimes used to make a sauce similar to the *ntwilo* made from ground-nuts, 'But', said a native, 'many people will never eat *amankolobwe*. It is only fit for a time of starvation. It is a thing to eat when a man is really hungry'—an interesting statement since this crop was evidently one of the earliest Bemba foods.

There are several wild fruits eaten by the Bemba. The chief varieties are the *mpundu*, the *masuku*, and the *umufungo*. These are eaten raw. In addition a sweet drink is made in the hot season by pounding both the *umpundu* and *umufungo* fruit with pestle and mortar, leaving the mixture to stand for about a quarter of an hour and then squeezing with the hands. This is known as *lumembwe*.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

437 any type of exchange of goods that actually existed in pre-European days, as apart from the joint consumption and pooling of food within the different kinship units. Formerly it seems clear that, [438] except for food brought to the capital, the only goods which circulated about the country were articles such as ironwork—chiefly hoes—brought from the surrounding tribes, salt carried from the local salt-pans near Mpika, and the various objects such as guns and cloth traded by caravans of Arabs. In most of these cases the goods were brought to the chiefs—whether given as tribute by conquered peoples or fetched by parties of his men. Commoners [439] occasionally went to the Lunda area to fetch hoes, or to the salt-● 263] pans to bring back balls of salt.[1] Fish was carried as tribute from the bigger rivers or fishing pools, but probably not traded to commoners to any extent.

438 The environmental conditions of the Bemba account to some extent for their poor development of trade, since conditions are, generally speaking, so uniform in this area that there is little reason for one district to exchange goods with another. In the neighbouring swamp area, on the other hand, the Bisa, Ushi, Unga, and other tribelets have control of great supplies of fish, not possessed by the other plateau natives, and they live on small islands each of which seems to lack one essential commodity—whether it is firewood, clay for pots, tall trees for canoe-building, soil for millet for brewing, &c.; and here the people, unlike the Bemba, live by trade with each other and with the European. But besides their environment the history of the Bemba probably limits their trading interests. A dominant tribe can get what it wants from subject peoples and an autocratic chief can monopolize such commodities as ivory, salt, or Arab goods so that the commoner does not reckon to trade with them at all. The Bemba concepts of wealth just described also affect their desire to barter or sell, and make it difficult for them to do so.

But, whatever the reason, the Bemba of to-day have no tradition of commerce, no habit of exchange, and as yet no abilities in this direction. They barter very little and have taken poor advantage of the Government's recent efforts to introduce markets at Kasama, Mpika, and Chinsali.[2] Without roads suitable for motor transport

[1] I am not clear what these parties took as goods to trade with, but heard of particular cases where men worked for the hoes they needed.

[2] The Pim Report [Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the